1: Krasheninnikov N-5 (1736-40) 1764 Kamchadal

CHAP. XII.

Of their SHAMANS, *or Conjurers.*

THE *Kamtſchadales* have none who are profeſſed *Shamans*, or conjurers, as the neighbouring nations have; but every old woman is looked upon as a witch and an interpreter of dreams. In their conjurations they whiſper upon the fins of fiſhes, the ſweet graſs, and ſome other things; by which means they cure diſeaſes, divert misfortunes, and foretel futurity.

They are very great obſervers of dreams, which they relate to one another as ſoon as they awake in the morning, and judge from thence of their future good or bad fortune; and ſome of theſe dreams have their interpretation fixed and ſettled. Beſides this conjuration they pretend to chiromancy, and to foretel a man's good or bad fortune by the lines of his hand; but the rules which they follow are kept a great ſecret.

CHAP. XIII.

Of their CEREMONIES.

THE *Kamtſchadales* always celebrated three days in the month of *November*, which is hence called the month of Purification. *Steller* imagines, that this was firſt inſtituted by their anceſtors to return thanks to God for all his bleſſings; but that afterwards, through the ſtupidity of theſe people,

6: Antropova E-4 (no date) 19 4 RY3 Kamchadal RY3

105 The Itel'mens believed in evil mountain and forest
[1776] spirits, the sea-spirit, Mitg, good protecting spirits, etc. Anthropomorphic images of the spirits were usually made of wood.

[1793] The central figure of Itel'men mythology was the raven-creator, Kutkh. But he was not held in esteem, and various comical and obscene stories were told about him.

[1764] The bodies of dead adults were given to the dogs to eat; children were
[1756] buried in hollow trees. The Itel'men shamans did not have any special clothing or tambourines.

[1799] In the middle of the 18th century, the Itel'mens were converted to Christianity, but they continued to cling to their animistic ideas.

175 Information about the abundance of fur on Kamchatka received from Luka
648 Morozko and Atlasov attracted the attention of the tsarist government and the Yakutiyan governors.

A special official—a prikashchik—was appointed to collect taxes. The Kamchatka prikashchiks, who were virtually the full masters of the peninsula, often abused their power. In addition to the fur-tax, they exacted from the population great quantities of furs for their own enrichment. The predatory extermination of fur animals, and most of all, sable, sharply reduced the catch, and the Itel'mens were often unable to pay the tax in full. The arbitrary extortion of cured fish, "sweet grass" for wine-making, lily tubers, berries, cedar nuts, seal blubber, skins, and even sleds, boats and clothing, for the benefit of the tax collectors became systematic. In addition to all this, the natives suffered from exploitative trading and its consequences—debt slavery.

175 The Itel'mens' struggle against extortions and oppression expressed
648 itself at first in attacks on individual representatives of the tsarist govern-
669 ment and raids on the tax treasury. Large uprisings broke out in 1706, 1711 and 1731.

The rebellion of 1731 involved nearly all the Itel'mens. After its suppression, a special "investigating office" was sent to the area to look into its causes. The leaders of the rebellion were executed. Some of the officials were also punished.

[161] The quelling of rebellions by armed force and the arbitrary rule of the
[1731] local officials reduced the Itel'men population. But the principal reason for the population decline was the epidemics of smallpox, typhus and other diseases which devastated entire districts. The remnants of the various
[614] clans could no longer exist independently and united into larger territorial
[178] units. Thus, instead of the former clan villages, new settlements sprang
[1728] up, inhabited by members of various clans. New villages were also created by compulsory resettlement. Thus, after the rebellion of 1731, the inhabitants of the village of Klyuchi were resettled in Kozyrevsk; the inhabitants of Nachiki were moved there from the western coast of the peninsula.

175 The system of tax collection through the village elders and the develop-
648 ment of barter with Russians resulted in the accumulation of private prop-
556 erty in the hands of some individuals. As early as the 1730's, there were
426 toyons (elders) who lent sables to their kinsmen to enable them to pay their tribute, in exchange for subsequent work.

175 The economic condition of the Itel'mens did not improve in the latter half
648 of the 18th century. This was due above all to the system of tax collection and the tyranny of the local authorities. Taxes were collected, not from the present population, but according to lists, which included men long dead. The living thus had to pay taxes for dead relatives. Extremely onerous, too,
[466] was the imposition of the duty to transport numerous officials, as well as cargo, without compensation all over the peninsula. This took the men away from their occupations and condemned them to frequent periods of famine.

7: Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

They are but
164 little ſubject to the ſcurvy; their uſe of
757 wild garlic, and various fruits and berries, is a preſervative. The Ruſſians and other ſettlers are more frequently afflicted with this diſeaſe.

Conſumptions are frequent enough; but boils, tumors, abſceſſes, and wens, are very common. They have no mode of curing them, but by inciſion or extirpation; and they uſe for theſe operations a knife, or perhaps ſimply a ſharp ſtone, which ſupplies the place of a lancet. Such inſtruments are calculated to impreſs us with no very high opinion of the ſkill of the operators; and it is obvious that the art of ſurgery, brought to ſuch perfection with us, is in a ſtate of the utmoſt barbariſm at Kamtſchatka.

178 Phyſic does not appear to have made a
756 greater progreſs; though it muſt be confeſſed

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

178/756 feſſed that theſe people have gained ſomething by learning to diſtruſt their impoſtors and abſurd empiricks. Formerly, ſelf-created magicians, called *chamans*, taking advantage of the credulity of the Kamtſchadales, turned doctors of phyſic, and thus ſecured to themſelves a double claim to their veneration and confidence*. Their ſtrange dreſs contributed to the impoſition, and ſuited perfectly their extravagant mummeries. What was told me upon the ſubject would exceed the utmoſt ſtretch of faith, if we had never heard of the Bohemians and other ſorcerers of this kind. It is not poſſible to form an idea of the buffooneries of theſe ſuppoſitious phyſicians, and the impertinencies they relate, to make their preſcriptions or pretended revelations go down. It is probable that their cures

* In an oſtrog at ſome diſtance from Bolcheretſk, I had afterwards an opportunity of conſidering this ſubject more fully, and my obſervations will be found in their proper place.

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

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756 were frequently attended with fatal conſe-
quences, and that the number of victims equalled that of their patients. Tired at laſt of being duped at the expence of their lives, the Kamtſchadales began to be diſ-ſatisfied with theſe impoſtors, who gradu-ally loſt their credit, and ſunk into con-tempt and oblivion. Such has been the fate alſo of the chamans. The feeble light which the Ruſſian commerce diffuſed through the country, proved ſufficient to open the eyes of the inhabitants. They perceived at once the abſurdity of the magic art of their doctors. As it ceaſed to be reſpected, it was no longer lucrative, and the number of magicians diminiſhed of courſe. Diſ-guſted with the trade, the men abandoned it; and it has ſince been taken up by ſome old women, who, poſſeſſing leſs ſkill, have doubtleſs fewer cuſtomers *.

The

* The revolution which took place in Kamtſchatka reſpecting the chamans, is the preciſe hiſtory of all our mountebanks.

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchada'

000 found, and feels an inſtant deſire to repoſe in him all its confidence. The ſight of M. Steinheil imparted to me this delicious ſenſation. There was in his converſation, from the very firſt moment, an irreſiſtible attraction. I felt a ſort of craving to ſee him, to talk with him; it had the effect of a charm, though his French, as I have ſaid, was not the moſt pure, and was pronounced with the German accent. I ſpent the day of 4 February with the baron, and in the evening M. Kaſloff arrived as he had previouſly informed me.

161
361
756
609
797 The oſtrog of Machoure, before the introduction of the ſmall-pox, was one of the moſt conſiderable in the peninſula; but the ravages of this cruel diſeaſe, have reduced the number of inhabitants to twenty families.

All the Kamtſchadales of this village,

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

177 men and women, are chamans, or believers
756 in the witchcraft of theſe pretended ſorcer-
797 ers. They dread to an exceſs the popes or
609 Ruſſian prieſts, for whom they entertain the moſt inveterate hatred. They do all they can to avoid meeting them. This is ſometimes impoſſible, and in that caſe, when they find them at hand they act the hypocrite, and make their eſcape the firſt opportunity that offers. I attribute this fear to the ardent zeal which theſe prieſts have doubtleſs ſhown for the extirpation of idolatry, and which the Kamtſchadales conſider as perſecution. They accordingly look upon them as their greateſt enemies. Perhaps they have reaſon to believe, that in wiſhing to convert them, the overthrow of their idols was not the only thing theſe miſſionaries had in view. Theſe popes probably ſet them no example of the virtues upon which they declaim. It is ſuſpected that their object is the acquiſiton of wealth,

rather

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

797 rather than of proſelytes, and the gratifi-
177 cation of their inordinate propenſity to drunkenneſs. It is not therefore to be wondered at that the inhabitants retain their
776 ancient errors. They pay a ſecret homage
782 to their god *Koutka**, and place in him ſo
224 entire a confidence, that they addreſs their
756 prayers excluſively to him when they are deſirous of obtaining any boon, or of engaging in any enterpriſe. When they go to the chace, they abſtain from waſhing themſelves, and are careful not to make the ſign of the croſs: they invoke their Koutka, and the firſt animal they catch is immediately ſacrificed to him. After this act of devotion they conceive that their chace will be ſucceſsful; on the contrary, if they were to croſs themſelves, they would deſpair of catching any thing. It is alſo a part of their ſuperſtition to conſecrate to

* This object of their worſhip is accurately deſcribed in Steller,

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

756 Koutka their new-born children, who, the
776 moment they have left their cradle, are des-
786 tined to become chamans. The veneration
534 of the inhabitants of this village for force-
177 cerers can ſcarcely be conceived; it ap-
proaches to infanity, and is really to be pitied; for the extravagant and wild abſurdities by which theſe magicians keep alive the credulity of their compatriots, excites our indignation rather than our laughter. At preſent they do not profeſs their art openly, or give the ſame ſplendour they once did to their necromancy. They no longer decorate their garments with myſtic rings and other ſymbolic figures of metal, that jingled together upon the ſlighteſt motion of their body. In like manner they have abandoned the kind of kettle *, which they uſed to ſtrike with a ſort of muſical intonation in their pretended en-

* A ſort of *tambour de vaſque* called *bouben*. It is ſtill in uſe amongſt the Yakoutſk, as will be ſeen hereafter.

chantments,

[Mashura--analyst]

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

756 chantments, and with which they announc-
786 ed their approach. In ſhort, they have for-
787 ſaken all their magic inſtruments. The following are the ceremonies they obſerve in their aſſemblies, which they are careful to hold in ſecret, though not the leſs frequently on that account. Conceive of a circle of ſpectators, ſtupidly rapt in attention and ranged round the magician, male or female, for as I have before obſerved, the women are equally initiated into the myſteries. All at once he begins to ſing, or to utter ſhrill ſounds without either meaſure or ſignification. The docile aſſembly ſtrike in with him, and the concert becomes a medley of harſh and inſupportable diſcords. By degrees the chaman is warmed, and he begins to dance to the confuſed accents of his auditory, who become hoarſe and exhauſted from the violence of their exertions. As the prophetic ſpirit is excited in the miniſter of their Koutka, the animation

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

756 mation of the dance increaſes. Like the
786 Pythian on the tripos, he rolls his ghaſtly
787 and haggard eyes; all his motions are convulſive; his mouth is drawn awry, his limbs ſtiffened, and every diſtortion and grimace is put in practice by him, to the great admiration of his diſciples. Having acted theſe buffooneries for ſome time, he ſuddenly ſtops, as if inſpired, and becomes now as compoſed as he was before agitated. It is the ſacred collectedneſs of a man full of the god that governs him, and who is about to ſpeak by his voice. Surpriſed and trembling, the aſſembly is inſtantly mute, in expectation of the marvels that are to be revealed. The ſelf-created prophet then utters at different intervals, broken ſentences, words without meaning, and what ever nonſenſe comes into the head of the impoſtor; and this is invariably conſidered as the effect of inſpiration. His jargon is accompanied either with a torrent

7:Lesseps T-3 (1787-88)1790 Kamchadal

756 torrent of tears or loud burſts of laughter,
786 according to the complexion of the tidings
787 he has to announce; and the expreſſion and geſture of the orator vary in conformity to his feelings. I was furniſhed with this account by perſons entitled to credit, and who had contrived to be preſent at theſe abſurd revelations.

000 There ſeems to be ſome analogy between theſe chamans, and the ſect called quakers. The quakers pretend equally to inſpiration, and there are individuls among them, who, guided by its ſuppoſed impulſe, hold forth in their ſilent meetings, and break out in piteous lamentations, or ſudden ſtarts of extravagant joy. The difference is this: theſe prompt orators harangue extempore upon the ſubject of morality, whoſe fundamental principles they endeavour to recommend; whereas the Kamtſchadale declaimers underſtand not a word of what they

29:Cochrane T-2 (1821-22)1824 Kamchadal

181 the extreme of oppression from neglect and mal-
435 administration, for one hundred and twenty years, should not have become wiser and more economical in their habits; on the contrary, one might suppose they were a people but yesterday discovered. They will part with the most valuable furs for a trifling article, or a glass of spirits.

177 I need say nothing of their superstitions, as they
793 are nearly at an end. They now place as much re-
756 liance upon the efforts of the priests, as they formerly did on their shamanes, with this difference only, that to the latter they give many furs, while to the former they only gave a hearty meal.

183 Of laws they have but few of their own, their
554 motto being something like that of the Chinese,
692 " to return evil for evil, and good for good." At
R present they await the arrival of the Chief, of an
177 Officer, or of a Commissary, with a great deal of
.69 ceremony, giving him the best lodging, and acknowledging, if I may so say, his supremacy. Formerly, it appears, they lived in a perfect state of equality and independence of each other, age and expertness in hunting alone being held in estimation or respect.

177 The Kamtchatdales are now supplied with culi-
181 nary utensils and every thing they can require by the Russians; and as they live exactly in the same manner, and in the same description of houses with the latter, I need only refer my readers to an account of a Russian village; in their outward ap-